

# in the big love living liturgies

“Lifting Our Eyes” • Psalm 121

## Worship Service for In-Home or Remote Group Use

*prepared by Rev. Kathryn M. Schreiber*

### Worship Note

*As we continue the selfless practice of Sheltering in Place, as we witness new losses and new gains, as we begin to adjust to living differently - our souls may be restless, forlorn, confused, over excited, or numb. This service is one of a series designed to tend the pandemic-stressed soul.*

### Preparations

- You may wish to arrange to worship distantly with others at the same time.
- You may wish to assemble a copy of your favorite version of today’s psalm.
- Read through this service beforehand to assemble items needed.
- A “Christ Candle” can be any sort of candle or object which represents Christ’s presence.
- Choose songs to sing (our suggestions or your favorites). Assemble what you’ll need to sing.
- Ensure an uninterrupted place to worship.
- Decorate the space to welcome God’s presence, as we do at church.

### Time for Children

“Out of the Bag: Gazing” on YouTube channel: Kathryn Schreiber

### Worship Service

*Please adapt to make this worship service your own. Your intention is what is important.*

### **We Gather**

#### **Call to Worship**

Dear Pilgrims,  
let our souls be gathered together  
as we journey upon this unknown path  
through this very familiar land.

Dear Companions,  
let our souls be gathered together  
as we miss each other’s presence  
while cherishing the true bonds of friendship.

Dear Siblings,  
let our souls be gathered together  
as the Light of Christ draws us closer  
now more clearly perceiving our eternal union.  
Amen.

#### **Light the Christ Candle**

#### **Song for Welcoming Christ**

*Suggestion: “When Morning Gilds the Skies” - German, LAUDES DOMINI (#100 Chalice; #487 HOL)*

### **We Unburden and Gather Hope**

#### **Naming Our New Reality**

*If you are with others in person or via devices please share what is on your minds and in your hearts. If you are alone, speak out loud to God. How has it been for you and your loved ones this*

*first week of Easter Sheltering in Place? What uplifts your spirit? What is familiar and comforting? What is challenging? Be honest. Name your truth no matter what it is. God is listening.*

### **Silent Prayer**

*In the quietude of your soul simply be in God's presence, just as you are. Your mind will wander. Thoughts will come up. Be kind to yourself. Temporarily let go of following your thoughts. Sit in God's presence, possibly repeating "Lord" or "Dear Provider" or "Holy One."*

### **Acts of Unburdening and Affirming**

*Place pebbles or small items at the base of the Christ Candle thinking or speaking whatever you wish to offer to God for release or gratitude. These offerings need not be named. The soul knows what to give to God and God knows what to receive.*

### **Blessing of Grace**

Without being asked, God is always present.  
 Without being critical, God is always watching us.  
 Without being harsh, God is always trying to guide us.  
 God's presence is different than any human presence;  
 it is more complete, more trustworthy, more consistent.  
 All the days of lives we are in need of God  
 and God is always there for us,  
 even when we cannot perceive God's presence.  
 Let us receive the blessing of this grace  
 with full souls and grateful hearts. Amen.

### **We Listen**

#### **Scripture Reading: Psalm 121 (New Revised Standard Version)**

*(If you have a favorite translation or would rather read from your personal Bible, please do.)*

I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
     from where will my help come?  
 My help comes from the Lord,  
     who made heaven and earth.

God will not let your foot be moved;  
     the who keeps you will not slumber.  
 God who keeps Israel  
     will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;  
     the Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
 The sun shall not strike you by day,  
     nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
     he will keep your life.  
 The Lord will keep  
     your going out and your coming in  
     from this time on and for evermore.

*May God add a blessing to the reading and reflecting upon this Holy Word. Amen.*

## Reflection Upon God's Goodness and Our Needs

*(If your pastor has prepared a sermon, please read/view it now.)*

*For Jews, Christians, and Muslims the psalms are holy scripture. The Christian name for this collection is "The Psalter" from the Latin "Psalterium" meaning the "Book of Psalms." The word "psalm" came to Latin from the Greek root word "psallein" meaning "to pluck the strings of a musical instrument." These one hundred and fifty-one psalms are lyrical poems.*

*The Psalter is a treasure chest, a wondrous prayer book filled with profound expressions of the human condition. Some Christians pray the psalms daily. If this isn't part of your spiritual practice, you may consider taking up "praying the psalms" more often.*

*This beloved psalm, Psalm 121, is one of the "Psalms of Ascent" - psalms (120-134) - believed to have been sung by Jewish pilgrims as they ascended the steps of the Temple in Jerusalem; songs Jesus and his family would have sung. Traditional Jews still put a copy of Psalm 121 in a room where a baby is about to be born. This prayer song is an ancient affirmation of God's trustworthiness, faithfulness, and protection.*

*Today, look out a window to gaze upon nature, looking at hills if possible. Or, turn inward and recall a fond memory of a favorite hilly place. Or, find an image of lush hills to view carefully. May the beauty of that earthly place fill your heart and mind. And then, again, re-read the psalm, which ever version feels the most soothing. Receive God as your Protective Keeper. Repeat whenever and as often as needed.*

### Song for Reflection

*Suggestion: "Open My Eyes, That I Might See" - CH Scott, OPEN MY EYES (#586 Chalice;#159 HOL)*

## We Pray

### Prayers of Petition

*On some days it is a great relief to "Take It to the Lord in Prayer." On other days, tending a prayer list feels like a burden. Today, come to God as you are. If you wish to make petitions, make them. If you do not, do not. A healthy relationship with God flows and is respectful of all participating. Besides, God already knows who needs a prayer. Prayer is God's gift to us.*

### Song for Prayer

*Suggestion: "O God of Love, O Power of Peace" - H W Baker, CANONBURY (Chalice #676)*

### The Lord's Prayer (unison)

*Imagine the sanctuary where you usually worship. Let the memory of your Beloved Community fill your soul and let us pray together the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:*

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

## We Give Thanks

### Offering

*Thank God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, for eternal presence and guidance. If God has strengthened or comforted you and your loved ones in a special way this week - offer heartfelt prayers of gratitude. And if you are possible, share your thanksgiving as a gift given to uplift others. What has God given you which you can share? (Please see the Donation note at the end of this document)*

## Song of Gratitude

*Suggestions: "Rejoice, You Pure in Heart" - E H Plumptre, MARION (#15 Chalice; #447 HOL)*

## We Continue in Hope

### Affirmation of Hope

When our faith-eyes have gone blind to God's presence - God sees us.

When our sleeping eyes are shut and when our waking eyes are open - God sees us.

When we are sun-blinded or overcome by night's darkness - God sees us.

When we see real dangers and evil in this world - God sees us.

We have always been seen.

We are seen right now.

We will always be seen. Amen.

### Song of Hope

*Suggestions:*

*"Christ Be Beside Me" - St Patrick, BUNESSAN ([https://hymnary.org/text/christ\\_be\\_beside\\_me](https://hymnary.org/text/christ_be_beside_me))*

### Benediction

What do we keep before our eyes?

What do we intentionally gaze upon?

This week, let us lift our eyes to the hills  
and focus upon the love of Christ.

St Teresa of Avila reminds us:

"Whenever we think of Christ,  
we should recall the love that led Him  
to bestow on us so many graces and favors,  
and also the great love God showed  
in giving us in Christ a pledge of His love;  
for love calls for love in return.

Let us strive to keep this always before our eyes  
and to rouse ourselves to love Him."

✠ *this concludes the service* ✠

**Online Chalice Hymnal:** <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/CH1995>

**YouTube Music Videos:** search by title AND one of the authors for best results

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